

Message Text

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ACTION EB-07

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TAGS: EAGR, ECON, UR

SUBJECT: SOVIET PRESS REPORTING ON CURRENT HARVEST/AVAILABILITY
OF MEAT AND BREAD IN TRANSCAUCASIA AND CRIMEA

REF: (A) C-ER-5-59243; (B) STATE 180416; (C) STATE 173835

1. SOVIET NATIONAL PRESS REPORTING OF HARVEST PROGRESS TO DATE, WHILE LESS INTENSIVE THAN IN RECENT YEARS, HAS TAKEN A GENERALLY OPTIMISTIC TONE; STRESSING THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF INDIVIDUAL FARMS AND REGIONS, WITH NO INDICATIONS OF AN IMPENDING MAJOR SHORTFALL IN OVERALL GRAIN PRODUCTION. WHILE SOME REFERENCES TO HOT, DRY WEATHER CONDITIONS AND SHORT STANDS OF GRAIN HAVE APPEARED, THE NATIONAL PRESS HAS CONTINUED TO MAINTAIN AN OVERALL ATTITUDE OF "WE SHALL OVERCOME" IN REFERENCE TO THE HARVEST.

2. SINCE JULY 30, A FEW ARTICLES HAVE SINGLED OUT A NUMBER OF OBLASTS AND REGIONS WHERE GRAIN HARVESTING (PARTICULARLY HAY) IS BEHIND SCHEDULE, NOTABLY SOME REGIONS IN THE OBLASTS OF KHARKOV, BELGOROD, VORONEZH, ORLOV, ROSTOV AND RYAZAN. IN THESE CASES, HOWEVER, THE BLAME HAS BEEN EXPRESSED IN SUCH FAMILIAR THEMES AS POOR ORGANIZATION OF TRANSPORTATION AND LACK OF SPARE PARTS FOR MACHINERY, RATHER THAN WEATHER CONDITIONS. IN ONE LOCAL PAPER (KRYMSKAYA PRAVDA, AUGUST 2, 1975), SEVERAL ARTICLES HAVE BEEN DEVOTED

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TO THE SLOW PACE AT WHICH THE PREPARATION OF LIVESTOCK

FEED IS PROGRESSING, NOTABLY IN THE KRASNOGVARDEISKY AND PERVOMAIISKY REGIONS (ARTICLES BEING POUCHED SEPARATELY).

3. RECENT TRAVEL TO THE TRANSCAUCASUS AND THE CRIMEA BY EMBOFFS REVEALED NO SHORTAGES OF BREAD, MEAT, OR OTHER FOODSTUFFS. HOTEL RESTAURANTS PROVIDED GOOD SELECTION OF ALL FOODS NORMALLY AVAILABLE. ADEQUATE SUPPLIES OF MEAT, BREAD, AND DAIRY PRODUCTS WERE AVAILABLE IN ALL MARKETS AND STATE STORES CHECKED. DURING DRIVE BETWEEN TBILISI AND YEREVAN, WEATHER CONDITIONS WERE HOT AND DRY, BUT THERE WERE NO INDICATIONS THAT SUCH CONDITIONS WERE ABNORMAL FOR THIS AREA. CROPS OF TOBACCO, TEA, AND FRUIT TREES APPEARED IN GOOD CONDITION. ALTHOUGH THIS IS NOT A MAJOR CORN GROWING REGION, THOSE CORN FIELDS OBSERVED APPEARED STUNTED (ABOUT 3 FEET HIGH) AND DRIED OUT, WITH BROWN LEAVES APPEARING ON MANY STOCKS.

4. DURING PREVIOUS TRIP THROUGH CENTRAL ASIA IN MID-JULY, EMBOFFS NOTED A SIGN IN ONE RESTAURANT (STOLOVAYA) IN TASHKET URGING THAT BREAD BE SAVED. THIS SIGN WAS ONLY OBSERVED ONCE, HOWEVER, AND NO OTHER EVIDENCE OF SHORTAGES (OR ATTEMPTS TO SAVE BREAD) WERE NOTED

5. EXPECT MORE COMPREHENSIVE REPORT OF CROP CONDITIONS WILL BE AVAILABLE UPON RETURN OF SPRING WHEAT TEAM TO MOSCOW ON AUGUST 8, 1975.
STOESSEL

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